



Mount Rainier National Park

Sister Mountain Project

The Japanese Artistic Tradition and Mt. Fuji

Overview

Introductory lesson on the significance of Mt. Fuji to the Japanese cultural and artistic tradition: The teacher may wish to use this lesson as an inspirational introduction or as an anticipatory set for cultural studies of Mt. Fuji and Mt. Rainier. This lesson gives students the opportunity to appreciate three classics from traditional Japanese literature and art showing Mt. Fuji.

Grade Level

8-12

Timeframe

30 minutes

Standards

- Washington State G.L.E. 2.3 The student expands comprehension by analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting ideas in literary text and
- 3.4: Reads for experience in a variety of genres.

Procedure

Explain to students that there are many references to Mount Fuji in Japanese culture. One of the earliest collections of poems comes from the Nara period of Japanese history. As early as the 8th Century C.E. there were already poems and stories in both written and oral forms about this beautiful mountain.

Use a think/write/share strategy with these pieces:

1. The first selection is from the collection of ancient poems in *The Manyoshu*:

It baffles the tongue, it cannot be named,

It is a god mysterious.

- How is Fuji presented in this poem? What might be the purpose of describing it like this?

2. In the second selection, Fuji is a source of inspiration for one of Japan's greatest poets, Basho:

Delightful, in a way,

to miss seeing Mt Fuji

In the misty rain.

By Matsuo Basho , **The Records of a Weather Exposed Skeleton 1698.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is one quality that Basho singles out about Fuji? • What is the key word in the haiku? Explain. • What connection(s) can you find between Basho's Haiku and the Manyoshu lines? <p>3. Show students a slide of Hosukai's "Beneath the Wave off Kanagawa" and/or any of his original prints from "The 36 Views of Mt. Fuji" series.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What message is the artist trying to convey about Mt. Fuji? • What appears to be the relationship between Mt. Fuji and the giant wave?
Extensions	<p>This lesson opens up endless possibilities for the teacher to explore according to their students age, abilities and interests. There are many other masterpieces in literature and art that use Fuji as their inspiration. Students might explore the life and works of Basho in more depth. Teachers might direct students to literary styles other than haiku. Exploring woodblock printing as an art form is another possibility.</p>